Remarks

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that, upon inputting of an identifying characteristic meeting the check criteria, a selection facility is enabled for "subsequent" actuation by the user to transmit the identifying characteristic to an identifying characteristic processing device. Claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the identifying characteristic is transmitted to the identifying characteristic processing device upon enablement of the selection facility and "subsequent" actuation of the selection facility by the user. Support for this change may be found in Figs. 3D-3E, which show enablement of the OK button 23 (Fig. 2) in step 3120 and subsequent user actuation of the OK button in step 3140. While this limitation is believed to have been implicit in the claim as previously presented, this amendment makes the limitation explicit.

Claim 6 has been amended in a manner similar to that of claim 1. In addition, claim 6 has been amended to delete the final clause "if the identifying characteristic meets the check criteria", since this is already implied by the recitation that the enabling means is "responsive to inputting of an identifying characteristic meeting the check criteria".

Claims 17-19 have been cancelled.

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9, 10, 12 and 14, constituting all the remaining claims in the case, have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,643,784 to McCulligh (paper no. 12, pages 2-4). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In applicants' claimed system, upon inputting of an identifying characteristic meeting check criteria (steps 3030-3110), a selection facility (Fig. 2: 23) that has remained disabled (step 3010) is enabled for subsequent actuation by the user (step 3120). Upon such enablement of the selection facility and subsequent actuation of the selection facility by the user (step 3140), the identifying characteristic is transmitted to the identifying characteristic processing device (step 3150). This dependence on both enablement and subsequent user actuation of the selection facility avoids user surprise and gives the user a chance to reconsider a password choice, for example, before it is processed.

McCulligh discloses a password generation method and system in which a status display 42 (Fig. 4) gives the user continuous feedback, as the characters making up the password are being entered, on whether the characters entered satisfy various password rules 20. While this has some similarities to applicants' claimed system, it differs in a critical respect. In McCulligh, once the user has entered a string of characters that satisfy the password criteria, the password is accepted by the system without user intervention. As the patentee notes (col. 6, lines 48-56) (emphasis added):

> [T]he per character change password evaluator 18 generates acceptance password change data 44 to the notification device 22 when all of the rules have been met. As such, there is no need for a user to activate password entry complete data as the per character change password evaluator 18 will automatically generate the acceptance password change data when there have been enough characters entered or, for example, where all characters that have been entered conform to the configured rule data.
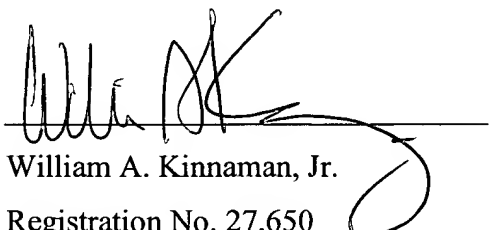
In the language of applicants' claims 1 and 6, McCulligh does not enable a selection facility for subsequent actuation by a user upon inputting of an identifying characteristic meeting check criteria, nor does he transmit the identifying characteristic to a processing device upon enablement of the selection facility and subsequent actuation of the selection facility by the user, as do applicants. Rather, McCulligh transmits the password to a processing device automatically upon inputting of a password meeting the check criteria, without any intervening steps of enabling a selection facility or subsequent actuation of that selection facility by the user.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 1 and 6 and the claims dependent thereon are believed to distinguish patentably over the McCulligh patent cited by the Examiner.

Conclusion

Reconsideration of the application as amended are respectfully requested. It is hoped that upon such consideration, the Examiner will hold all claims allowable and pass the case to issue at an early date. Such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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